

6 Years of No Child Left Behind: Reform is Needed

Written by Mike Honda
Thursday, 20 December 2007 19:00

This week marks the 6th Anniversary of the enactment of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. As a former teacher, school principal, and school board member, I am committed to ensuring that all our children receive a high-quality education; that our teachers and administrators are supported in their efforts; and that America's schools are safe. I believe that significant changes to NCLB are needed to ensure that our children receive the education they need to succeed in our increasingly globalized economy.

NCLB provided a series of unfunded mandates and broken promises. Many of the problems are the result of the Department of Education's clumsy, confusing, and in some cases, outright detrimental implementation of the law.

In an effort to counteract the mistakes made by the Bush administration during implementation of NCLB, the House Education and Labor Committee released a draft of proposed improvements to NCLB for public comment in September of 2007. I have made a number recommendations to improve this draft and help combat the administration's one-size-fits-all approach, its over-reliance on high stakes testing, and the curriculum narrowing our schools have experienced in response to a focus on math and language arts testing. Read more about [my education initiatives](#)

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Improving education has a price

Unfortunately, President Bush's Fiscal Year 2008 budget request failed to provide adequate funding to pay for the full implementation of NCLB. Through the leadership of the Democratic Congress, we increased funding by \$3.2 billion over the President's request for education. As a result, an additional 314,000 disadvantaged children will receive the reading and math instruction they require compared to last year. The Democratic Congress also provided an additional \$173 million to help 34,000 more teachers enhance instruction in the classroom as compared to the President's request. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I am proud of these increases in funding as well as of increases for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), English language learners, Pell Grants, Reading First, and support for vocational and career education.

The education of our youth is the greatest investment our nation can make. Quality education

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assures the nation's economic competitiveness, advances the arts and sciences, and provides the means for people to achieve individual success. Our children deserve a world-class education.